

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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SIX CALIFORNIA BUTTERFLIES PROPOSED FOR ENDANGERED LIST

Six species of California butterflies are being crowded into the ocean by human development, and Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has moved to protect them by proposing them for listing as endangered species. The proposal was published in the Federal Register recently.

The Service has already sought the views of the Governor of California with regard to the status of all these species, and it now invites the public to participate in the rulemaking process. All interested persons may submit any written comments, suggestions, objections, or factual information germane to this proposal to the Director (FWS/LE), Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240. All comments received through November 3, 1975, will be considered.

The six species are the San Bruno elfin, lotis blue, mission blue, Smith's blue, El Segundo blue, and Lange's metalmark.

Currently there are no regulations in effect to conserve or protect these species. Moreover, the six species are faced with the present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of their habitats or ranges. An intensive review of the six shows the following:

THE SAN BRUNO ELFIN. This butterfly is limited to living in a few moist canyons in San Mateo County, California. Proposed development poses a serious threat to its continued existence. The butterfly is dependent

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upon the present lay of the land and the floral elements in the valleys. The most important weak spot in the butterfly's life cycle is its caterpillar food plant, stone-crop.

THE LOTIS BLUE. This butterfly is definitely known to live only in a few isolated bogs in Mendocino County, California. The principal portion of the butterfly's habitat occurs on a powerline right-of-way. Formerly, a population of the lotis blue occurred at Point Arena, Mendocino County, California, but it has not been found there for over 30 years, and the population there is presumed extinct.

THE MISSION BLUE. This butterfly is limited in distribution to two small isolated populations which live on the summits of Twin Peaks, San Francisco County, and the San Bruno Mountains, San Mateo County, California. In San Francisco County, the mission blue was formerly more widespread on the higher hills, but due to expansion of the city and plantings of exotic plants such as eucalyptus, it is now reduced to a tiny remnant on Twin Peaks and may soon become extirpated. In the San Bruno Mountains, the species is uncommon, and proposed developments there probably would eliminate the butterfly.

THE SMITH'S BLUE. This butterfly lives on coastal sand dunes in Monterey County, California. Its largest population occurs on the coastal side of the Monterey dune complex at Seaside and probably Fort Ord, Monterey County, California. The Seaside and Marina populations have been almost extirpated by housing developments and highway construction, while the Fort Ord populations have been most seriously impacted by heavy foot and vehicle traffic as well as the spread of introduced ice-plant.

THE EL SEGUNDO BLUE. This butterfly was formerly widespread on the El Segundo sand hills of Los Angeles County, California. Now, due to public and private development, the El Segundo blue is limited to a few acres near El Segundo and a larger area at the west end of the Los Angeles International Airport. Any further development on these few remaining sites could well bring about the species' extinction.

THE LANGE'S METALMARK. This butterfly originally lived on the sand dunes near Antioch and Oakley in Contra Costa County, California. It has not been found at Oakley for more than 30 years. Near Antioch the populations are now largely restricted to a few acres north of Wilbur Road. Alteration of the species' habitat has been due largely to industrial and agricultural development.